

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A gum packing assisting tool for forcing soft gum tissue of a patient around a tooth comprising:

an endless strand of material,

the endless strand being made of a material which is easily sterilized,

the endless strand being made of a flexible dense material which stretches when under tension and which returns to its original shape when the tension is released, and which admits of few, if any, pockets for housing germs and contaminants therein,

wherein the length of the endless strand is less than the circumference of tooth around which soft gum is to be forced around, so that the endless strand can be tensioned to allow the endless strand to be placed over and encircle the tooth and to tightly grip the edges of the tooth when the tension is released, and

wherein the endless strand tool has portions of its cross-section to be of circular configuration so as to facilitate rolling downward of the endless strand over the sides of a tooth to the gum line ~~off the~~ of the patient.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended) The gum packing assisting tool of Claim 1 wherein the ~~cross-sectional area~~ cross section of the endless strand tool throughout its length is substantially constant.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended) The gum packing assisting tool of Claim 1 wherein the cross-section ~~area~~ of the endless strand tool varies along its length.

Claim 4 (Original) The gum packing assisting tool of Claim 3 wherein the cross-sectional area of the endless strand tool has at least two widened portions, the ends of which are spaced from each by an equal distance.

Claim 5 (Original) The gum packing assisting tool of Claim 1 wherein a portion of the endless strand tool has at least one projecting tab to allow a dental practitioner to grip and pull the tab to elongate the endless strand tool to permit easy removal of the endless strand tool from around a tooth.

Claim 6 (Original) The gum packing assisting tool of Claim 2 wherein a portion of the endless strand tool has at least one projecting tab to allow a dental practitioner to grip and pull the tab to elongate the endless strand tool to permit easy removal of the endless strand tool from around a tooth.

Claim 7 (Original) The gum packing assisting tool of Claim 3 wherein a portion of the endless strand tool has at least one projecting tab to allow a dental practitioner to grip and pull the tab to elongate the endless strand tool to permit easy removal of the endless strand tool from around a tooth.

Claim 8 (Original) The gum packing assisting tool of Claim 4 wherein a portion of the endless strand tool has at least one projecting tab to allow a dental practitioner to grip and pull the tab to elongate the endless strand tool to permit easy removal of the endless strand tool from around a tooth.

Claim 9 (Original) The gum packing tool of Claim 5 wherein the endless strand tool has at least two projecting tabs equally spaced from one another to allow the dental

practitioner to grasp and pull the tabs for easier elongation of the endless strand to assist in placing on and removal of the endless strand tool about a tooth.

Claim 10 (Original) The gum packing tool of Claim 6 wherein the endless strand tool has at least two projecting tabs equally spaced from one another to allow the dental practitioner to grasp and pull the tabs for easier elongation of the endless strand to assist in placing on and removal of the endless strand tool about a tooth.

Claim 11 (Original) The gum packing tool of Claim 7 wherein the endless strand tool has at least two projecting tabs equally spaced from one another to allow the dental practitioner to grasp and pull the tabs for easier elongation of the endless strand to assist in placing on and removal of the endless strand tool about a tooth.

Claim 12 (Original) The gum packing tool of Claim 8 wherein the endless strand tool has at least two projecting tabs equally spaced from one another to allow the dental practitioner to grasp and pull the tabs for easier elongation of the endless strand to assist in placing on and removal of the endless strand tool about a tooth.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended) The gum packing tool of Claim 1 wherein the endless strand tool ~~as~~has a medicinal coating for treatment of any one of: pain, infection, and pain and infection.

Claim 14 (Original) The gum packing tool of Claim 1 wherein the endless tool is biodegradable.

Claim 15 (Original) A kit of a plurality of gum packing tools as defined in Claim 1 wherein the plurality of tools includes tools of at least one of different length endless strands, different thicknesses, and different shapes.

Claim 16 (Original) A kit of a plurality of gum packing tools as defined in Claim 2 wherein the plurality of tools includes tools of at least one of different length endless strands, different thicknesses, and different shapes.

Claim 17 (Original) A kit of a plurality of gum packing tools as defined in Claim 3 wherein the plurality of tools includes tools of at least one of different length endless strands, different thicknesses, and different shapes.

Claim 18 (Original) A kit of a plurality of gum packing tools as defined in Claim 4 wherein the plurality of tools includes tools of at least one of different length endless strands, different thicknesses, and different shapes.

Claim 19 (Original) A kit of a plurality of gum packing tools as defined in Claim 5 wherein the plurality of tools includes tools of at least one of different length endless strands, different thicknesses, and different shapes.

Claim 20 (Original) A kit of a plurality of gum packing tools as defined in Claim 9 wherein the plurality of tools includes tools of at least one of different length endless strands, different thicknesses, and different shapes.

Claim 21 (Original) The method of packing soft tissue gums around a tooth comprising the steps of:

- selecting a gum packing assisting tool of Claim 1,
- tensioning the gum packing assisting tool to stretch the tool,
- placing the stretched tool over and around a tooth,
- releasing the tension on the tool,

moving the tool along the tooth until the tool touches the soft tissue gum adjacent the root portion of the tooth,

tamping the tool to move the touching soft tissue gum against the root portions of the tooth, and

removing the tool from the tooth.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~19~~21 wherein the moving of the tool is accomplished via rolling of the endless strand of material toward the gum line.